

# Robert Scheer at FFF Conference 2007, Part 5 of 6

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Robert Scheer on "Ike Was Right and We Are Becoming What We Despise" at the Future of Freedom Foundation's <http://fff.org> Restoring the Republic, 2007.

Robert Scheer covered presidential politics for The Los Angeles Times for thirty years. He is the author of six books, including: *With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush, and Nuclear War*; *America after Nixon: The Age of the Multinationals*; and coauthor of *The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us about Iraq*.

Playlist of Scheer's lecture: [http://www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419)

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what are the few other people in this room who is something other than a dark oak analyst I'd like to ask can everyone hear me I'd like to ask yes I'd like to ask your thoughts on the failure of the liberal intellectuals in particular if you've read the essay by Tony Judt pushes useful idiots which I would recommend anyone here who hasn't read it what I haven't read it I'll go get it what is your question what are your thoughts on the failure liberal intellectuals well the biggest failure of liberal intellectuals is that they endorsed the Cold War and you know simplicity and it's in a cowardly way and opportunistic way and you know I still think of Daniel Ellsberg's a liberal I don't know what he thinks to himself but you know we had good liberals to have you stand up you know they just weren't too many it turns out liberals when they get it to government are opportunistic to the same degree as conservatives or anyone else like I've met a few people at this convention who tell me they work for government they're libertarians you know so you know we live in a society in which opportunism and careerism and you know making out is a pretty important thing and I think that basically liberalism went along with power didn't withstand it and we're not going to put everybody in that camp the other thing that liberals there's probably not germane to the subject of this whole conversation but the people who write and cover things and everything don't tend to see things and whether they're conservatives are there

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whether they're conservatives are there liberals from the point of view of the other and a lot of gut economic issues when we're talking about ripping off of undocumented workers or we're talking about screwing taxpayers who can't afford or so forth I not felt by politically empowered people whether they're liberals or conservatives in the same way they are felt by the other and so there's very little reporting of how the state affects people's lives and I would say that's the big cop out that you know it doesn't really matter at the end of the day what people tell you where they believe in or what church they go to a fact if they don't follow the rule of caring about the more vulnerable people in society and the people who don't have a voice that people can't spend a lot of time covering things which is the what generally happens they will be trail so that's it everyone just agrees with me or no yeah yeah I was wondering how you felt about the new young people who go into journalism are they interested in becoming investigative reporters and to try to find out the truth or are they just buckle under and I've got a good job and don't want to really rock the boat yeah let me also take your ship isn't creepy i personally i have to preface this by saying that I think there are a few more admirable people in the world and speak of receiving however I disagree with this general comment that's made about the state of education of young people I at USC very good school I have I don't know over 500

students a year and there is sharp as any group of young people I've ever met in the course in my life I just don't buy into the General Assembly don't know and what they don't know they can learn very quickly thanks to the Internet incredibly easy for instance I show all of the stones movie Nixon and I green John Keenan yes they've never heard of John Dean because why because

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heard of John Dean because why because we're focused on the SATs and this and this and their thing and they don't really know what Nixon did and they don't know what what a gate was about but we have this movie that Oliver made and suddenly I've got John be nearing its played by a famous actor in the movie so he's got their attention and I can tell you by the end of that three hour class they know more than their parents doing that Watergate it's right there on their wife lies on your laptop they're checking out everything they can find and so when I think of the state of youth today I think the failure is with the media with the political leadership you know I had a lot of young students who worked for John Kerry not too many worked for Bush you know because they saw him as the frat guy who was cruising but they were four and they would be betrayed by Kerry I'll never forget the moment when Bush said knowing what you know now would you have voted for the war and Kerry said yes instead of saying no lie to the Senate you lie to the people of course I wouldn't go for it and I just remember how the air just went out of these kids they were out there working so I agree with what you know some so if its choice is just working for opportunistic candidates forget it it's just will increase cynicism as far as young journalists you know I don't want I don't like to put down earnest because journalists are at a very often a brave people particularly when they go for covering us like Iraq or you know people out and get killed and injured and so course I'm not going to take anything away from that where they tend not to be brave they don't tend not to where they become abject cowards is in their own building they sail out of the building I don't care whether it's the LA Times the New York Times whatever they'll take on that CEO they'll take on a dictator somewhere but you ask him what's going on in your own building why was that story killed why was that person fired why was this decision made why don't we cover those things and they become like a little Church mice and it's like criminology I

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Church mice and it's like criminology I don't know I think this one is closer to the editor I think this happened I hear this story and they whisper and they look in the tea leaves so the big problem with journalism is is you know AJ Liebling is a great media critic for The New Yorker once wrote and said freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one and and the media will not do a good job of covering their own ownership the problems of media concentration the pressures on it and again I applaud the internet which I happen to think is the great liberating saving aspect of American life it's not perfect is that I have credit and then hunted garbage and everything else but but you know damn it you know Mark Twain said a lie gets halfway around the world before the truth puts his pants on now with the internet to choose only what a year you know so i would say for young young journalist i agree with what kinda before that that his curiosity is the concern and i think they're going to come through I don't go for old fogey ism ever I don't think the 60s were great you know I I don't think that the best generation was in World War two you know I don't think the Goldwater youth to take closer to home were also marvelous you know I think we kind of glorify the past Daniel Ellsberg can tell you because I interviewed him when he was the middle of the Pentagon Papers thing and he got damn little support from his old friends you know here was the guy doing the obviously correct courageous clear thing to do right and you could look where did they all scatter for cover how many really came to his defense how many really supported him this guy was not some pinko pacifist you know he was a vet he was a gun toter you know he had supported war and what he would this message was just him here's the truth

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message was just him here's the truth sweet it look at no one ever said it wasn't the truth no one ever said it was inaccurate or was a bad history and I remember those days when he was a very lonely figure and it looked like he was going to go to jail for a hell of a long time if Nixon had his way and I don't recall a long parade of people from the establishment liberal or conservative stepping up to defend them so when people talk to me about the good old days I don't recall them and I think this group does just as good a job and as I say on the internet our website is put out by 25 year olds and they're great and we have no shortage of people try it client for the jobs you know if you guys got some companies and one advertised there you'll help him make it a better about a business model any other time for one more one more question speaking of a good old days I seem to remember another country that was attacked that had never attacked us and it was all based on a bunch of lies about genocide it was called Serbia where did you stand on that war you know I'll have to google it I'm serious you know I'll think I think I was I was certainly i wrote i know i wrote a post to the idea that somehow suddenly the Croats and their baggage and everybody were Saints in the Serbians for monsters because I remember that the Serbians were the ones who fought against Hitler and I remember that others were willing to be concentration camp guards and so forth so I always I would not go along with the demonization of one side or another in that and I was very cool or electro and you're sorry but you know after the reason i said i would have to do with it is i've said dumb things and I've written dumb things in my life and it's possible that you know this might fall into that category

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know this might fall into that category I don't think so

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